

earnings test. It is an anachronism left over from the Depression era.

Mr. President, I want to thank Senator ROTH, and I want to thank Senator MOYNIHAN for his efforts. I thank the distinguished majority leader for his efforts.

This issue is not going away. We owe it to the seniors of this country. It is a terrible disservice not to pass this legislation at this time, although I certainly understand why the other side might object.

We could have passed this long ago. I hope that we can do it as soon as possible beginning next year.

THE LINE-ITEM VETO

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, before I yield the floor, I want to mention one other issue.

Many of us, including the Senator from Indiana, who is here, have worked long and hard on the line-item veto. We worked on the line-item veto irrespective of who the President of the United States was.

I would like to express my deep disappointment that the conference has not acted since February when we passed the line-item veto and we have come to a great impasse on the line-item veto and have not given it to the President of the United States.

Again, I am going to sound obstructionist, but this issue will have to be brought up also as an amendment and for debate if we are not willing to have a conference meet and the conference decide to pass this. It was passed by over 70 votes when we passed it through the Senate, with a far higher majority in the House of Representatives.

When we ran on this side of the aisle in 1994, we made a commitment to pass a line-item veto and to give it to the President of the United States irrespective of the party affiliation of that President.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will now go into executive session to begin consideration of the START II treaty.

ORDER OF PROCEDURE

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I think the Democratic leader and I want to be in a position to announce that there probably will be no more votes today.

I think on the START II Treaty, which is now pending under an agreement, I promised the Senator from New Mexico a couple of weeks ago that we would try to do this before we left.

It is my understanding—in fact, the Presiding Officer is one of the principal players—the bill will be managed on this side by the distinguished Senator from Indiana, Senator LUGAR, and he advises me that it may not be necessary to have a rollcall. There may be one amendment in the process of being resolved.

Senator THURMOND has suggested that we go only as far as presentation of the resolution of ratification—that would be satisfactory with me if it is satisfactory with the Democratic leader—because he would like to have the President sign the Defense authorization bill and not finally dispose of the START II until the President has made a determination.

But I think, based on what I have been able to find out in the last few minutes, if it is satisfactory with the Democratic leader, I think we could announce that there will no more votes today.

Mr. DASCHLE. Mr. President, I appreciate the majority leader's cooperation on this issue.

It appears that there is one outstanding issue that may or may not be resolved with a rollcall vote. If we could make it in order that the amendment and presentation of the resolution of ratification be the only matters pending relating to START and the return, I think we can accommodate the schedule and it will please all of those involved in the negotiations.

Mr. DOLE. Mr. President, I believe we can also dispose of nearly all of the nominations on the Executive Calendar. Of course, anything that we can do by unanimous consent—I think the Senator from Delaware and the Senator from Utah have a bill that will take 1 hour, and it will not require a rollcall vote, on victims' restitution.

Mr. BIDEN. That is correct.

Mr. DOLE. Perhaps that can be disposed of today, and any other matters that we can dispose of on a consent basis—obviously, we will be here later today.

So, based on that comment from the Democratic leader, I think we will announce there will be no more votes today, no votes tomorrow, no votes on Sunday, no votes on Monday, and no votes on Tuesday.

Mr. BYRD. Mr. President, will the distinguished leader yield?

Mr. DOLE. I am happy to yield.

Mr. BYRD. I hope we will have a rollcall vote on the treaty. So, we can be assured of that at some point.

Mr. DOLE. Yes.

Mr. BYRD. I thank the leader.

Mr. DOLE. I think it is a very important treaty. We should have a rollcall vote.

Mr. THURMOND. May I make inquiry? As I understand, there will be no votes before Christmas, final vote on this treaty? Is that correct?

Mr. DOLE. That is correct, according to the wishes of the distinguished Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. THURMOND. Does that give the President a chance to sign the defense bill?

Mr. DOLE. I think once he recognizes the merit of it, certainly he will be disposed to sign it.

Mr. THURMOND. It is to his advantage and to the advantage of the troops and to the advantage of the defense for him to sign it.

Mr. DOLE. I thank the Senator.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Will the majority leader yield?

Mr. DOLE. Yes.

Mrs. HUTCHISON. Mr. President, if the Senator will yield for a question, I just wanted to ask about the House resolution that will cover veterans.

Mr. DOLE. We are working on that. The two leaders have discussed not only that provision, but the District of Columbia, foster care, and AFDC. It is our hope that before we leave here today, we can reach some accommodation.

I have also discussed that with the distinguished Senator from New Hampshire, Senator SMITH, who is very interested particularly in the veterans part having had a phone call this morning from a veteran friend of his.

So, hopefully, we can resolve that. The Senator from Massachusetts has an interest in that, too.

TREATY WITH THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON FURTHER REDUCTION AND LIMITATION OF STRATEGIC OFFENSIVE ARMS (THE START II TREATY)

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair will announce that the clerk will report the treaty, which is the pending business, and then recognize Senators.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Treaty document No. 103-1, Treaty with the Russian Federation on further reductions and limitation of strategic offensive arms, the START II treaty.

The Senate proceeded to consider the treaty.

Several Senators addressed the Chair.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Virginia.

VETERANS

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I wish to associate myself with the remarks of the distinguished Senator from Texas. I am reassured that the leader will try to work out this matter with respect to the veterans. The Senator from Texas has taken a lead on this. Senator SIMPSON, the chairman of the Veterans Committee, and myself and the Senator from Texas will be monitoring this through the day.

Thank you very much.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I know we have before us an extremely important measure which Senator LUGAR and Senator PELL are going to lead and manage on the floor.

I had an opportunity to talk to both Senator PELL and Senator LUGAR. It is with their acquiescence that they are going to permit me to speak very, very briefly on another matter and that those comments would be at an appropriate place in the RECORD.

So I do not intend to be more than 5 or 6 minutes. But it is on a matter which I think needs addressing.